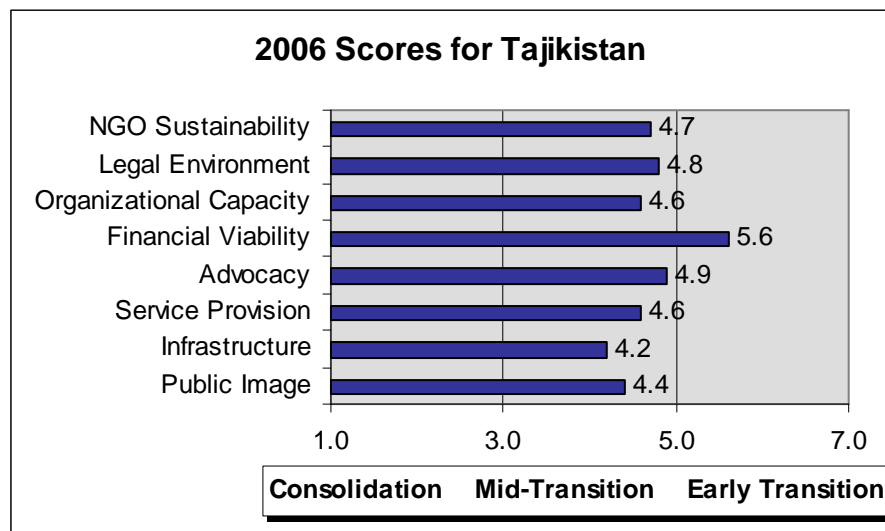


Tajikistan



Capital: Dushanbe

Polity: Republic

Population:
7,32,815

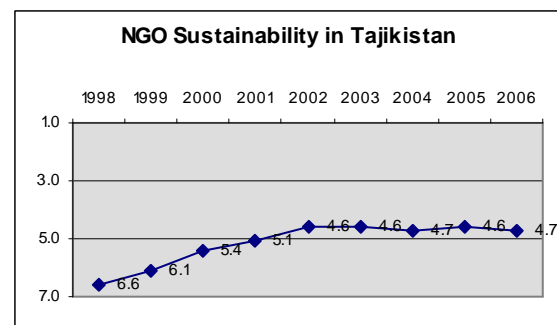
**GDP per capita
(PPP):** \$1,300

NGO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.7

In the period leading up to the November 2007 presidential elections, Tajik organizations experienced a rise in political pressure from the government and law enforcement agencies. The State Prosecutor's Office and local authorities made inquiries into the activities of numerous organizations. In addition, the government drafted the Law on Public Associations; many experts fear that if it is enacted, government officials will be able to exert even greater control over NGOs. Organizations remain heavily dependent on international donors, though the government made a declaration that it intended to begin providing NGOs with funding from the national budget. Though the funding has yet to materialize, local governments already support NGO activities with in-kind donations.

Numerous NGOs attempted to lobby Parliament to promote improvements to the draft Law on Public Associations. These efforts, along with the few other advocacy campaigns, have remained apolitical. The government, however, remains skeptical about NGOs and is not open to any input from civil society. Overall, the political environment continues to be hostile for NGOs. Local authorities require

that NGOs inform them of any visits by representatives of international organizations, especially those that work in the fields of democracy or human rights.



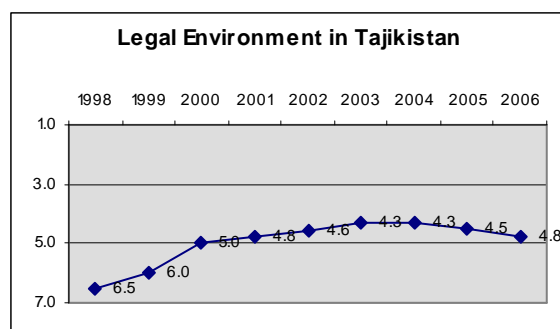
NGOs endeavor to provide social services to the public, though with few exceptions, poverty precludes them from charging fees that cover their costs. Over the past year, some newspapers published several articles that were written by NGOs and contained social and political analysis. The public is generally aware of NGOs and their activities, though people's perception of NGOs is often limited to that of humanitarian assistance and community mobilization organizations. The State seems to recognize NGOs' ability to address the issues

that government entities lack the qualified

personnel, information, or financing to address.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 4.8

The legal environment governing NGOs remains largely unchanged. The laws are favorable and allow NGOs to register and conduct their activities. The government, however, is slow in processing application materials for new organizations applying for registration. This is especially so for organizations trying to register with missions that address issues such as education, information, and human rights. NGOs have little knowledge of the legal framework. Parliament is expected to adopt the new draft Law on Public Association and NGOs have been unable to promote their interests in the drafting and deliberation processes. The government is also considering a draft law on Social Partnership; active organizations in the regions and international experts were able to discuss and provide comments on the draft law.



NGOs operate freely under the current legal framework, though other than a few human rights organizations, they rarely criticize government officials or provide opinions that are in conflict with popular opinion. Government officials, including those from the tax agencies, began inspecting and pressuring NGOs, especially those in the Sughd region, before the presidential elections. Law enforcement agencies monitored NGOs closely, and the Ministries of Justice, Security and Internal Affairs, and the state prosecutor's office continued to visit NGOs and conduct inquiries about their work. District and regional authorities required that NGOs regularly brief them on their activities in the territories where they operate.

There is a shortage of attorneys that specialize in civil society issues, especially in the regions. Local attorneys are typically general practitioners and lack specific knowledge of NGO law. The law exempts NGO from paying the VAT as well as taxes on their grants. NGOs are required, however, to pay social security tax, income tax, and other taxes. The law allows NGOs to engage in economic activities, but fails to create mechanisms that facilitate contracting between the government and NGOs for social services. With few exceptions, the government does not provide funding to NGOs.

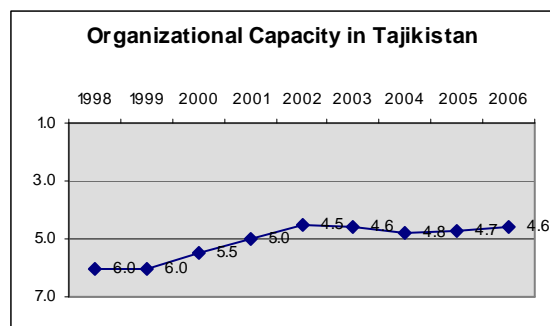
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.6

NGOs, especially the more advanced organizations, are suffering the effects of brain drain. As employees of domestic NGOs gain more experience, knowledge, and skills, they seek positions with international organizations. This problem is exacerbated by the waning of international funding that supported the activities of domestic NGOs. Despite brain drain, the more advanced organizations have re-registered and more clearly defined their missions, goals, and strategic plans. These

organizations adhered to their missions more closely, were better organized, and had greater management capacity than in the past. In addition to implementing grant projects, the advanced organizations are providing training to other organizations, which demonstrates their high skill levels.

Despite advances made by some organizations, others continue to operate with broad mission statements that allow them to solicit funds for a variety of activities. NGOs are generally

dominated by charismatic leaders. Due to the lack of funding, many organizations have minimal staff. The majority of NGOs has clearly defined management structures, delineates the responsibilities of the board of directors and staff, and is transparent in its decision-making process. Such organizations, however, often minimize the role of their boards of directors.



The majority of organizations has a small permanent staff and hires employees only when funding is available for specific tasks. Over the past year, many leading NGOs continued to attract volunteers and promoted volunteerism in the communities where they operate. Their use of volunteers allowed them to increase the

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.6

International organizations are the only sustained source of funding for NGOs. Philanthropic support for NGOs does not yet exist, through corporations and citizens provide charitable and humanitarian support directly to beneficiaries. NGOs often do not declare the donations they receive due to the current laws and corrupt tax officials. The central government stated this year that it would begin contracting with NGOs for social services, though the value of the contracts is expected to be minimal. At the district and regional levels, local authorities provide financial and in-kind assistance to support social service projects.

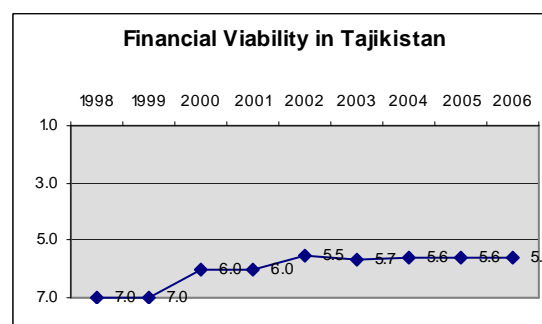
The majority of organizations, even those that have received training, have yet to adopt sufficient financial management and accounting mechanisms. Most organizations submit financial reports to regional tax authorities,

competitiveness of their proposals, improve the sector's public image, and strengthen their constituencies. Volunteers often appreciate an opportunity to learn about the NGO sector, develop skills and knowledge, and develop job prospects.

Most organizations have very basic office equipment and communications technology. Access to the internet remains an obstacle to information sharing, though it has improved over the past year. NGOs have little or no access to software or funding to maintain their equipment and supplies, and many do not keep records on their personnel.

The most talented, educated, and energetic professionals in the labor market consider the NGO and business sectors as providing the greatest opportunities, allowing them to combine interests in research with practical field experience. International organizations, and at times the State, reference and incorporate NGO publications, surveys, and research into their work.

though some NGOs prefer to withhold information about their activities and funding so to avoid pressures from the tax authorities.



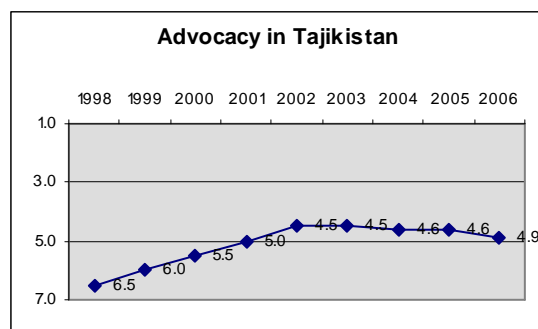
There are very few sustainable NGOs. Despite abundant training, NGOs are not able to sustain themselves without external financing. Most NGOs are unable to generate enough income in membership fees to support their core staff, and qualified employees often search for other

job opportunities. NGOs do not publish annual reports due to fear of harassment by tax authorities, and when submitting reports to local authorities, provide only vague and general information. Even by opening bank accounts, NGOs risk attracting unwanted attention from tax authorities. Organizations involved in voter education, consumer and human rights, and other such activities are especially vulnerable.

NGOs have yet to fully develop their fundraising skills. Though the central government encourages special partnerships with NGOs, authorities at the regional level do not possess the experience necessary to develop such cooperative relationships. During this year's budget negotiations, members of parliament and other government officials made

statements concerning the need for allocating funding for civil society initiatives. The final budget, however, provided no such funding. The Association of Civil Society Support Centers (CSSC), which secured an agreement for funding from the Committee for Youth Affairs, was the only organization that was able to secure funding from the government budget. Government officials often view NGOs as a potential source of funding to address social and development issues. Consequently, "social partnership" generally means that NGOs must secure the partnership financing. The majority of NGOs continue to rely on support from international donors, and have adopted accounting, monitoring, and reporting systems that conform to their donor's requirements.

ADVOCACY: 4.9



Over the past year, NGOs limited their advocacy efforts to promoting public interest issues such as the rights of consumer and at-risk citizens. Some organizations proposed amendments to the law on public associations, while other NGOs promoted reforms to the Law on Micro-Credit Organizations, the Law on Environmental Expertise, and others. The NGO sector, however, remains incapable of influencing parliament and other government

bodies as they make decisions and form policy. NGOs, however, understand the concept of lobbying and promoting the interests of their constituents.

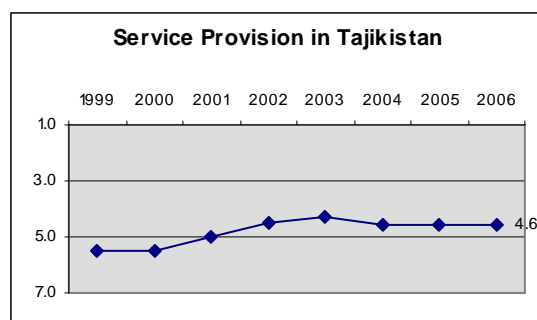
The political environment in Central Asia, however, fueled the public's skepticism about NGO activities, and limited the ability for organizations to engage in human rights and election monitoring activities. Government officials closely monitored such activities and the organizations involved, and the Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs, as well as the tax authorities conducted frequent inspections. Local authorities require that NGOs inform them of any visits by representatives of international organizations, especially those that work in the fields of democracy and human rights.

SERVICE PROVISION: 4.6

NGOs provide a wide range of services, including economic analysis, education, specialized training, legal consultations, public opinion surveys, micro-credit lending, environmental protection, and others.

Numerous organizations promote traditional handicrafts, agriculture, and economic activities. Most NGOs realize the need to charge fees for their services but fail to market their products sufficiently, which include publications, studies and research, training, expertise, and consulting.

Many NGOs conduct research and analyses, though the public takes little interest in their work and their readership is limited to other specialized organizations. The demand for consultations is growing in a variety of fields and generally provided on a contractual basis. Most organizations view international donors as their sponsors.

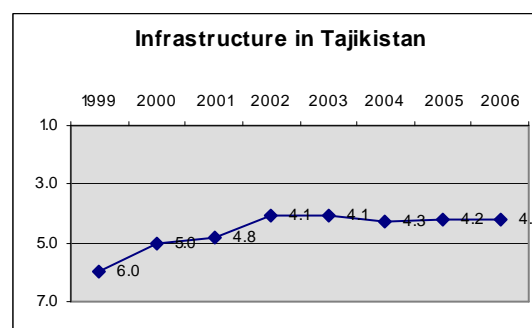


Only a few NGOs are able to financially sustain their activities by providing goods and services for fees. Though the legal framework limits the opportunities for providing services commercially, the Association of Auditors and Accountants, NGO Tajik Training, and other specialized associations are able to generate significant amounts of income by charging fees to provide vocational, language, or internet training.

The government generally recognizes NGOs as experts and potential partners. Government officials at times expect the funding NGOs receive to supplement the weak state budget for addressing social issues.

INFRASTRUCTURE: 4.2

The seven Civil Society Support Centers, the NGO Support and Training Center Manizha, NGO Tajik Training, and others all provided NGOs with consultations and training. Their office equipment, communications systems, training capacity, and other resources are in constant demand by domestic organizations. Local grantmaking organizations or foundations do not yet exist, and charitable support from the local business community is underdeveloped. With few exceptions, the State does not provide support for social partnership initiatives, though government officials recognize the importance of forming associations and coalitions to address social issues and exchange information. Most organizations, however, are reluctant to commit resources to or formalize their participation in such associations.



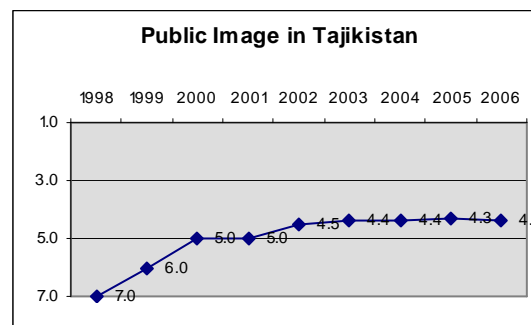
NGOs understand the importance of training, though access to in-country training resources is limited by the lack of resources. The decrease in international support for civil society organizations in Tajikistan has forced NGOs to further develop mechanisms to improve their financial viability, which requires more training programs. NGOs most frequently request training programs on topics such as legislation, taxation, accounting, general management, communications, volunteerism, media relations, sponsorship, fundraising, and social partnership.

Inadequate commercial and tax laws hinder the ability of NGOs to develop domestic philanthropy. On occasion, local authorities provide NGOs with in-kind support such as

facilities in which to hold training seminars. International organizations at times hire local NGOs to provide training programs.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.4

The public is generally aware of NGOs and their activities, and often perceives NGOs as providers of humanitarian services, as well as community organizing. NGOs have yet to develop strong relations with the media and coverage of NGOs is scarce, limited in large part by the inability of NGOs to pay for coverage of their activities. Some organizations understand the importance of highlighting social problems in the media, but media outlets, which are for-profit entities, are generally uninterested in social issues or NGO analysis. Over the past year, however, newspapers have published several articles by NGOs that analyze social or political issues.



Government institutions rarely trust NGOs, unless they are engaged in small infrastructural or health care projects. The State, however, does recognize the ability of NGOs to address issues that the government can not address due to the lack of qualified personnel, information, or financing.